



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Newark High School Students Demand Action to Reduce Plastic Pollution

Students work with community groups to develop advocacy and educational videos

NEWARK, NJ - NY/NJ Baykeeper, Rutgers University, and Ironbound Community Corporation partnered with East Side High School's media program to develop social media memes, presentations, and a [series of videos](#). The videos are created from the voices of City of Newark youth who are dealing with daily the consequences from plastics in their waterway, the Passaic River.

The goal of the project is to educate, inform, and foster energy to organize for change from damaging disposable plastic culture towards Zero Waste solutions. Videos can be viewed on Ironbound Community Corporation YouTube Channel [here](#). The project was made possible by funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Urban Waters Program.

Community members have been advocating to cleanup the Passaic River Superfund site for decades. Preventing plastic litter from entering the river is a component to cleaning up the river and bringing back life and public access.

“ICC has been working to clean up the Passaic River and bring back community access to the river for decades,” **said Molly Greenberg, Ironbound Community Corporation.** “Plastics continue to pollute the Passaic River from the entire 17 mile stretch. We need to work together as Passaic River communities to stop the toxic and wasteful culture around plastics, the health of our communities and our environment depend on it.”

NY/NJ Baykeeper conducted a [research study](#) that estimated at least 165 million plastic particles are present within NY-NJ Harbor waters at any given time. The most plastics within the NJ sampling sites were found in the Passaic River. Once plastic enters local waterways by means of littering and stormwater runoff, the plastic breaks up into tiny pieces known as microplastic. However, the plastic is non-biodegradable and exists in the environment indefinitely. Aquatic life mistake plastic particles for food and thus the plastic and contaminants within and attached to the plastic travels up the food chain contaminating the food web.

“The work of our students informs community members about the dangers of plastic pollution,” **said Sandra Meola, NY/NJ Baykeeper.** “As the public reevaluates their relationship with single-use plastics, aggressive waste prevention policy must be a priority.”

“Plastics are a blight on our environment and it is imperative that we address it immediately,” **said Dylan Alves, Intern Supervisor and former East Side High School Student.** “Only through the combined and localized efforts from communities around the world can we stand a chance to solving this dilemma.”

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About NY/NJ Baykeeper

NY/NJ Baykeeper is the citizen advocate of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. Since 1989, we’ve worked to protect, preserve, and restore the environment of the most urban estuary on Earth – benefiting its natural and human communities. Through our Estuary-wide programs we seek to end pollution, improve public access, conserve and restore public lands, restore aquatic habitats, encourage appropriate and discourage inappropriate development, carry out public education, and work with federal and NY/NJ state regulators and citizen groups as partners in planning for a sustainable future for the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary watershed. To learn more, visit www.nynjbaykeeper.org

About Ironbound Community Corporation

The Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) was founded in 1969 by residents, ICC's mission is to engage and empower individuals, families and groups in realizing their aspirations and, together, work to create a just, vibrant and sustainable community. In addition to early childhood education and direct service programs, ICC organizes various resident led environmental justice and community development campaigns. Ironbound has historically been an industrial and residential community where factories operate right next to homes. Bound on all four sides by the airport, the highways, the rail lines, and the Passaic River, it's one of New Jersey's environmental justice communities. ICC remains committed to improving the health and quality of life for the community. To learn more, visit <http://ironboundcc.org/>.

About East Side High School Media Arts Program

East Side High School's award winning Media Arts Magnet Program is the school's signature academy. The program provides students with engaging art experiences and instruction in a variety of new media practices including film, animation, digital design, 3D modeling and printing, audio engineering, and traditional arts all within polymedia art makerspaces. In a project based instructional model, student work is designed to have a life outside of the classroom. Partnering with local art galleries, art organizations, and community groups, students contribute to the city's cultural life and are given the opportunity to effect positive social change.

Protecting, preserving, and restoring the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary since 1989.
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